

MARVEL

008

SOULE • SUDZUKA • MILLA

DAREDEVIL[®]

ALL-NEW STORY
BLIND MAN'S BLUFF
STARTS NOW!



MACAU.

I
RAISE. FIFTY
THOUSAND.

These cards
I'm holding?

Absolutely
no idea what
they are.



WHEN MATT MURDOCK WAS A KID, HE LOST HIS SIGHT IN AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING A TRUCK CARRYING RADIOACTIVE CHEMICALS. THOUGH HE COULD NO LONGER SEE, THE CHEMICALS HEIGHTENED MURDOCK'S OTHER SENSES AND IMBUED HIM WITH AN AMAZING 360-RADAR SENSE. NOW MATT USES HIS ABILITIES TO FIGHT FOR HIS CITY. HE IS THE *MAN WITHOUT FEAR*. HE IS...

DAREDEVIL

MATT MURDOCK BECAME A FAMOUS DEFENSE ATTORNEY BUT WAS EVENTUALLY FORCED TO PUBLICLY REVEAL HE WAS DAREDEVIL.

HE HAS MYSTERIOUSLY FOUND A WAY TO KEEP HIS SECRET FROM THE WORLD AGAIN AND HAS NOW BECOME A PROSECUTOR FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK. BUT MATT DOESN'T MIND AN OCCASIONAL ADVENTURE OUTSIDE OF THE BIG APPLE...

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF PART I

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The cards are covered in a coating to protect them from wear. It also means I can't read them with my fingertips, enhanced senses or no.

But this is *poker*. Texas Hold 'Em, to be specific. One of the only games I can really play in a casino, as a blind man.

Because in this game, it's not so important to read the cards...

...if you can read the *people*.

These are all *expert* players, or they wouldn't have gotten this far in the tournament.

They have complete, perfect control of their faces and body language. They communicate exactly what they want to, nothing more.

But there's more than one way to read someone.

MR. LEVASSEUR RAISES FIFTY THOUSAND.

Chang. Slow, measured heartbeat. He's calm. He knows he's lost, and he's about to fold. He's got nothing left to worry about, and so he's completely relaxed.

Ms. Marcos. Her heart's pounding-- but it's not a winner's heartbeat.

She loves to win, but *hates* to lose. Her pulse jacks up *twice* as fast when she has a losing hand. It makes her angry.

And right now, she's *furious*.

Hank. Hmm. He's steady. Hard to tell what he's thinking, one way or the other.

Except that he's tapping his toes inside his boot-- which he only does when he's got a bad hand.

It's not even a *tell*, really, because no one at the table can detect it.

No one *else*, anyway.

Which leaves Flex.

SEE THAT RAISE, AND LET'S BUMP IT UP ANOTHER FIFTY K, ALL RIGHT? FEELIN' GOOD TONIGHT.

Uh-oh.



KING
OF DIAMONDS.
RIVER SHOWING
TWO PAIR.



WELL,
LOOK AT
THAT.

Okay, two pair
showing, and
it's just Flex
and me left in
this round.

If either of us has a king or
nine, we'll have a full house,
which is a hell of a hand.

But if we *don't*,
then...all right. Work
through the odds. We
know that the other
players wouldn't have
folded if they...

Eh.

You know what?

Let's just see
what happens.

ALL IN.

LATER.

This island used to be a Portuguese colony-- their last, until China took it back in 1999.

Now it's a playground, under China's control but with its own laws--it's one of the only places in the country you can legally gamble, for one thing.

I've pulled this poker trick before, but it was half a world away, in Monaco, and under a different name. No one should make the connection. I hope not, anyway.

The Triads run this place, and they don't mess around.

MAY I JOIN YOU?

THAT IS, UNLESS YOU WOULD RATHER BE ALONE.

NOT AT ALL. I'M MEETING A FRIEND LATER, BUT...THAT'S LATER.

EXCELLENT. MY NAME IS ADHIRA.

LAURENT LEVASSEUR.

LEVASSEUR...
ARE YOU
FRENCH?

SOMETIMES.

AH, WELL,
EITHER WAY,
YOU SEEM TO BE A
LONG WAY FROM HOME.
WHY HAVE YOU COME
ALL THE WAY TO
MACAU?



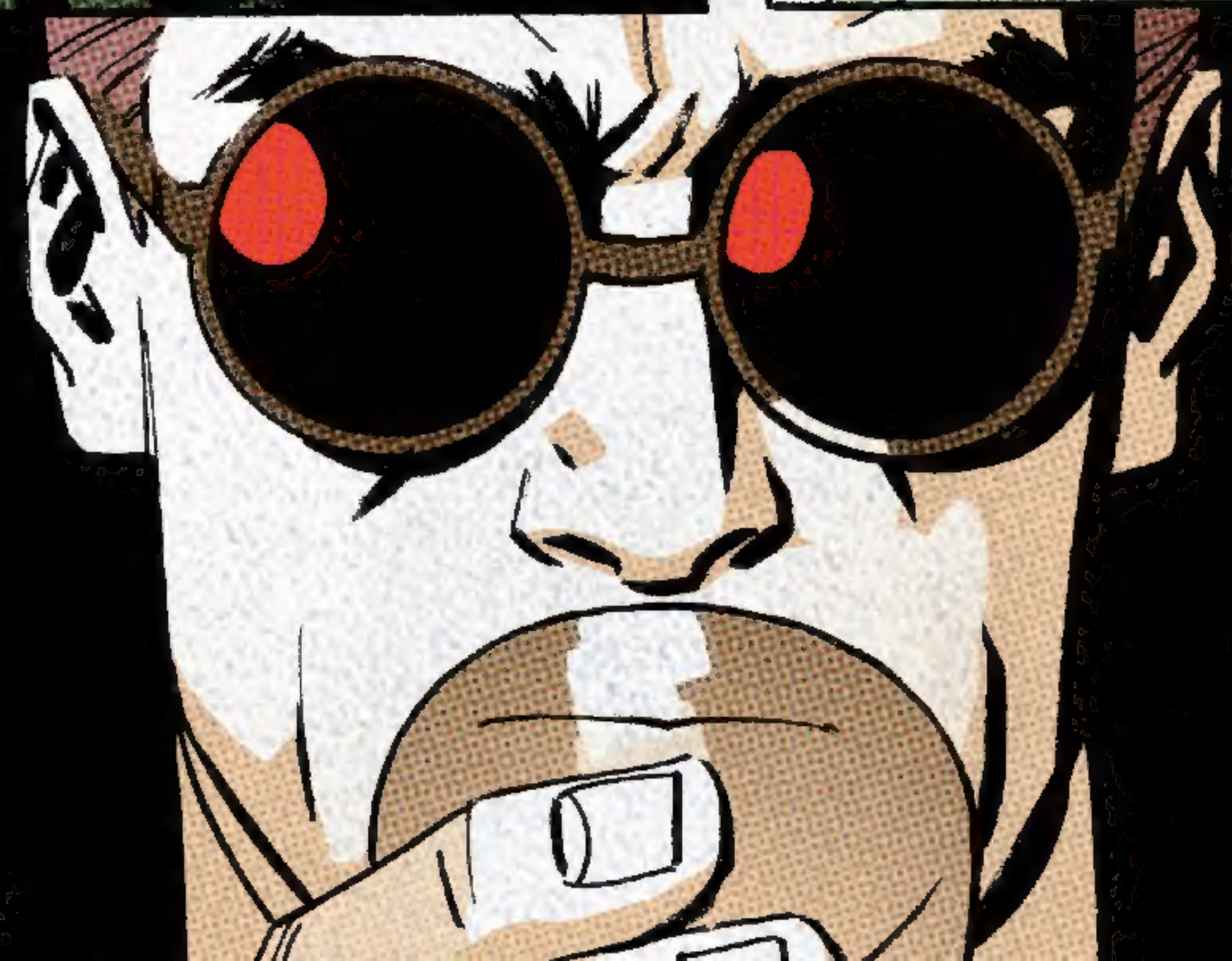
WHERE
IS IT? TELL ME!
RIGHT NOW!

I...IT'S...

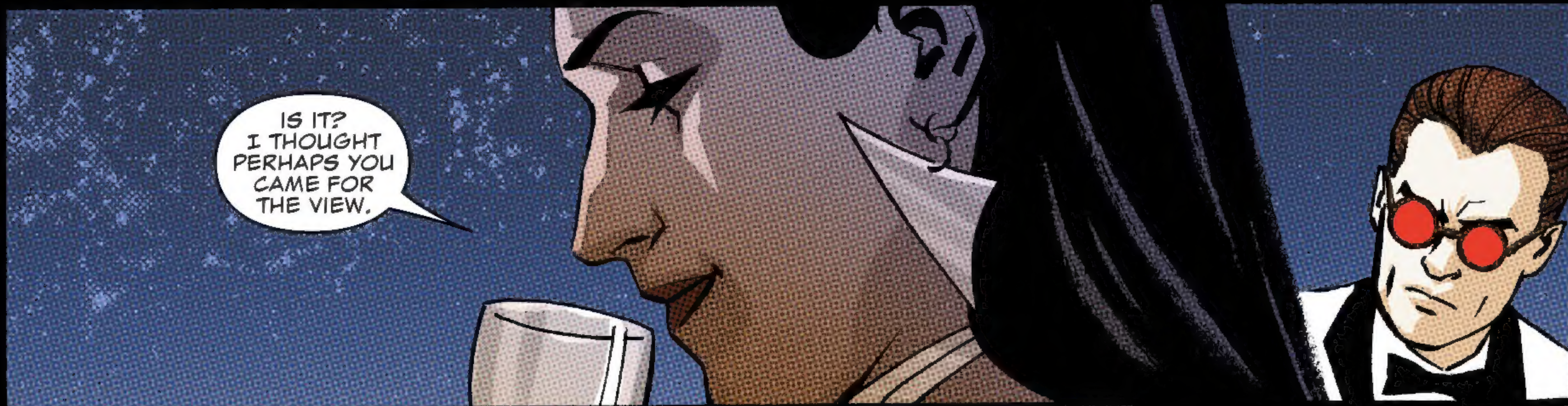
WHERE?
TELL ME WHERE
THE BLACK CAT
PUT IT!



MACAU,
MAN. IT'S IN
MACAU.



IT'S
COMPLICATED.



IS IT?
I THOUGHT
PERHAPS YOU
CAME FOR
THE VIEW.

I'M
GENERALLY
NOT BIG ON
SCENERY.



ALTHOUGH
THAT DEPENDS
ON THE
SCENERY, OF
COURSE.

MM. OF
COURSE.



I WATCHED
YOU WIN THAT
SEMIFINAL ROUND IN THE
POKER TOURNAMENT. I WAS
AMAZED THAT YOU WENT
ALL IN AT THE END THERE
WITH SUCH A WEAK
HAND.

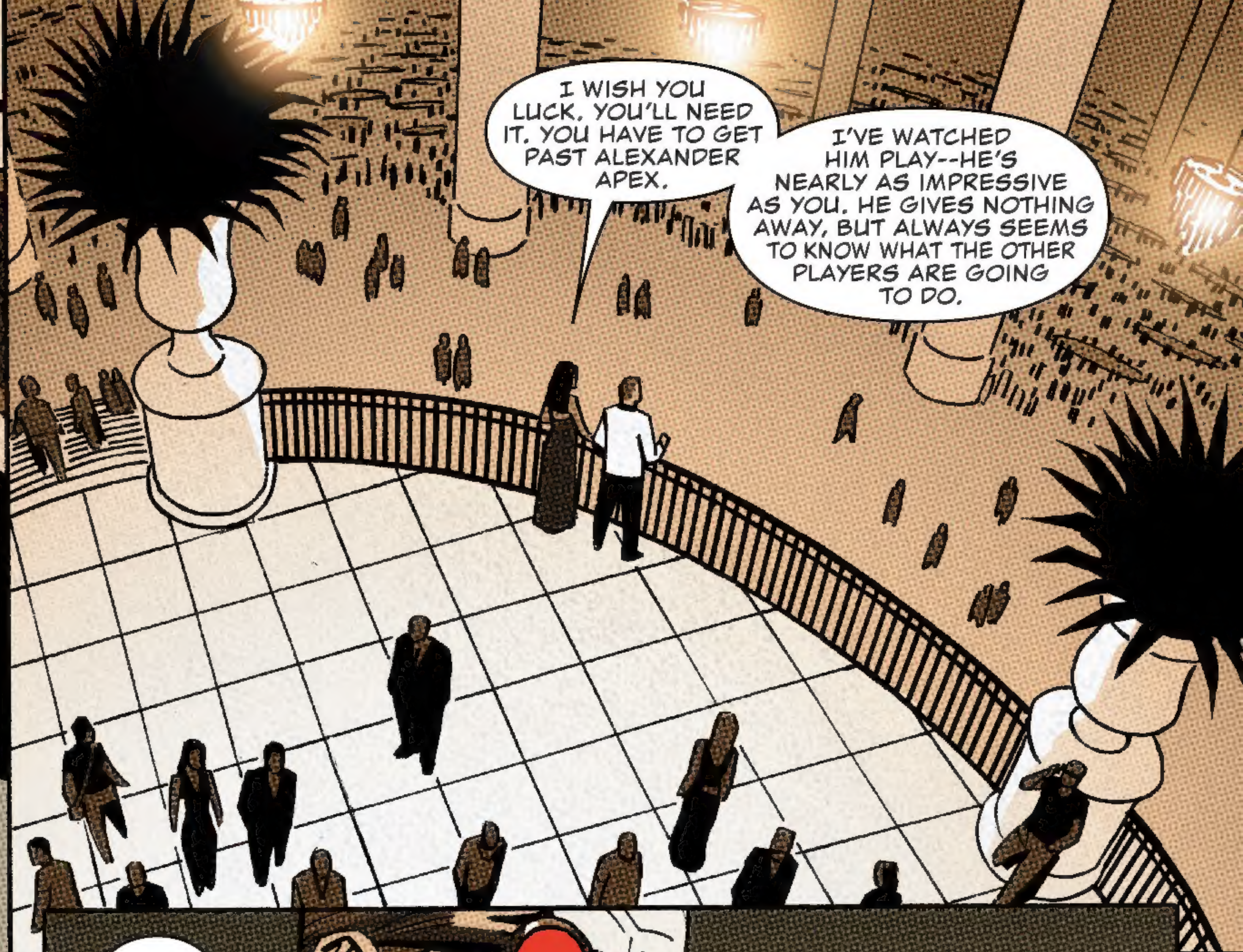
DID YOU
KNOW FLEX WAS
BLUFFING?

ACTUALLY,
NO. THEN AGAIN,
THEY DO CALL IT
GAMBLING.



HA! YOU ARE
FEARLESS, MR.
LEVASSEUR.

KLNK



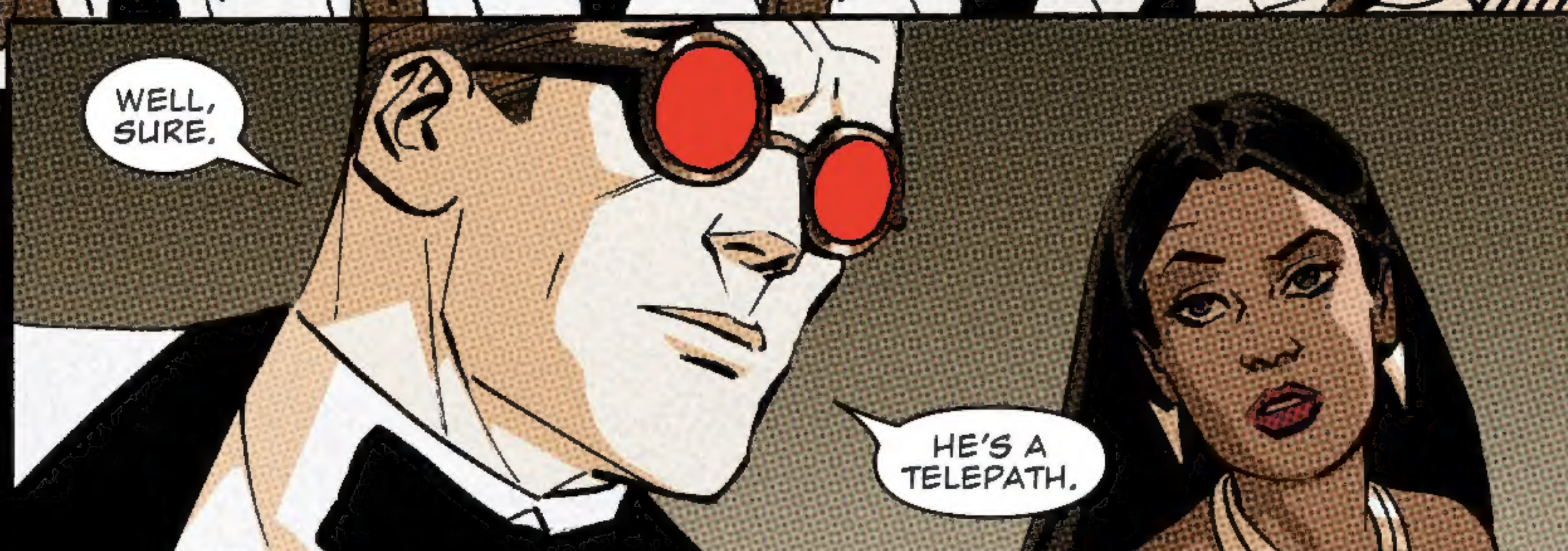
I WISH YOU LUCK. YOU'LL NEED IT. YOU HAVE TO GET PAST ALEXANDER APEX.

I'VE WATCHED HIM PLAY--HE'S NEARLY AS IMPRESSIVE AS YOU. HE GIVES NOTHING AWAY, BUT ALWAYS SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT THE OTHER PLAYERS ARE GOING TO DO.



JUST ONE MORE GAME LEFT TO PLAY--THE FINAL. DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU'LL WIN THE WHOLE THING?

THAT'S THE IDEA, ISN'T IT?



WELL, SURE.

HE'S A TELEPATH.



WHAT? HE READS MINDS? WHY DOES THE CASINO ALLOW HIM TO PLAY? I THOUGHT THEY HAD PEOPLE IN THEIR EMPLOY WHO COULD DETECT SUCH THINGS.

YOU MUST TELL SOMEONE. THE PIT BOSS, OR CASINO MANAGER.

NAH. WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD.

WHAT? WHY IN THE WORLD NOT?

BECAUSE, ADHIRA--



--THEY ALREADY KNOW.



"APEX USED HIS ABILITIES TO HUSTLE CASINOS ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT WORKED FOR A WHILE...BUT IT DIDN'T WORK FOREVER."

"LIKE YOU SAID, THEY HAVE THEIR OWN TELEPATHS ON THE PAYROLL, AND EVENTUALLY THEY GOT WISE."



"THE PEOPLE WHO RUN THIS PLACE CAUGHT HIM, AND THEY GAVE HIM A CHOICE."

"A SHORT HELICOPTER RIDE AND A LONG DROP INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, OR AN EXCITING NEW JOB WITH THE CASINO."

"YOU KNOW THE RULES FOR THIS TOURNAMENT--IT'S WINNER TAKE ALL, AND MOST OF THE ENTRY FEE FROM THE PLAYERS GOES BACK INTO THE POT AS THE PRIZE."

"BUT IF THE CASINO HAS ONE OF THEIR OWN WIN THE TOURNAMENT, THEN THEY KEEP EVERYTHING."



HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS? NONE OF THE OTHER PLAYERS SEEM AWARE THAT ANYTHING IS WRONG.



TELL ME... EVERYTHING.

I DO MY HOMEWORK.

FINE, ALL RIGHT, BUT IF ALL THIS IS TRUE... HOW WILL YOU BEAT HIM? HE HAS THE CASINO ON HIS SIDE, AND WITH HIS POWERS...



Iced tea.

HONESTLY, ADHIRA...

"...I'M JUST HOPING I GET LUCKY."

000

KEEPING US WAITING? WHAT IS THAT, SOME SORT OF STRATEGY?

SURE, OR MAYBE I JUST WANTED TO FINISH MY DRINK. YOU TELL ME.

LET'S PLAY CARDS.

Apex's powers let him dip into the other players' minds.

It's why he always wins.

CHECK.



He knows what everyone else is holding.

He sees through their eyes.

To which I say, Mr. Apex...



...I wish you the best of luck.







FIVE OF HEARTS FOR THE TURN.



GRAAH!

God, he's strong.

In a world with telepaths around every other corner, a secret identity doesn't last unless your mental walls are strong.

I have defenses against psychics--Stick and my other senseis taught me to protect my mind as much as my body.



This kind of fight is nothing new for me.



MR. APEX? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?

YES, SIR.

UH...I... I RAISE, RAISE FIFTY.

But my God, he's strong.

And I think he's just getting started.

This is just my mind's interpretation of Apex's attack.

AGH!

SLASH

But it *feels* real enough.

All right, pal. You want to raise...



"LET'S
RAISE."



ALL IN.

MR.
LEVASSEUR
IS ALL IN.

THWAP

The stakes here...this isn't
just about the game anymore.

MR. APEX...
YOUR NOSE.
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

W-WHAT?

If he breaks through my defenses,
he'll know *everything*. He'll know
who I am...what I'm trying to do.

I'M FINE,
I'M FINE!

I CALL,
DAMMIT! NEXT
CARD!

Why did
I do this?



AHHHAHAHA!

SSSSK

Why do I always
have to roll
the dice?

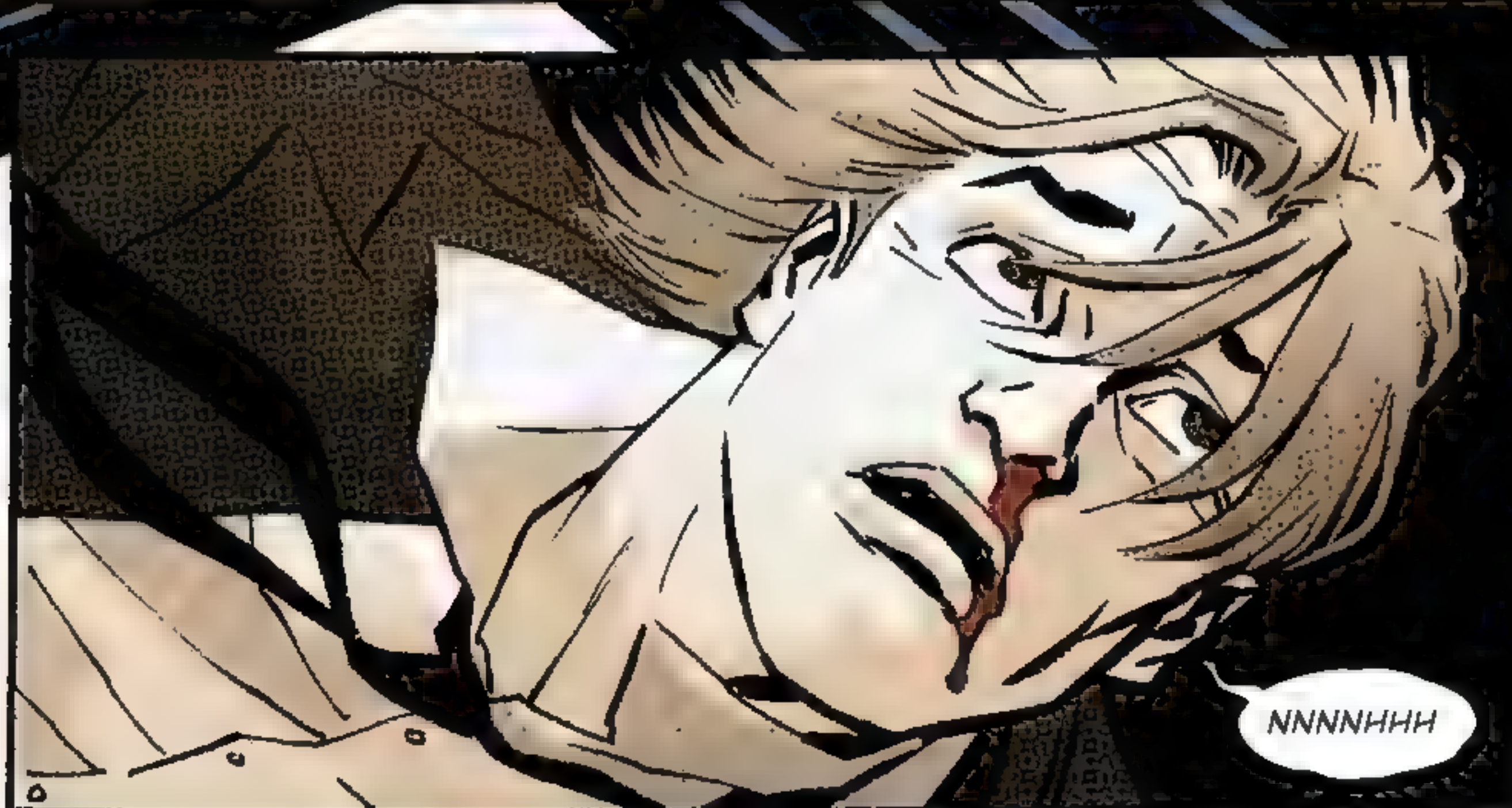
I'm always *chasing*.
Trying to make up
my *losses*.

Betting everything
I have to get back
in the game.

My *identity*,
Kirsten, Foggy, my
happiness...my *life*.

On some level,
I know it's foolish.
A *compulsion*.

But if I
don't play...



The hotel comped me a room on their top floor--their best suite. They said it was in honor of my winning the tournament. A nice gesture.

Except it's not. They just don't want me to leave.

They have no idea how I beat Apex, and now they're trying to keep me here long enough for him to recover and win all this money right back for them.

So, they give me a fancy room.

MR. LEVASSEUR, THAT WAS INCREDIBLY IMPRESSIVE. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT. I'D LOVE TO DISCUSS IT WITH YOU, PERHAPS--

And, presumably, anything else I want. Anything to keep me here.

ANOTHER TIME, I'VE GOT A FRIEND TO MEET, REMEMBER?

But the truth is, I'm not going anywhere. This is exactly where I want to be.

Ten million dollars. Hong Kong. Not bad for a day's work. Too bad I can't cash it. It's made out to Levasseur.

Ten grand down the drain--plus the cost of the plane ticket.

Time to get to work.

Oh, well. Cost of doing business.

HEY, THERE.



TOOK
YOU LONG
ENOUGH.

TO BE CONTINUED...

**YOU WANT TO KNOW
WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT?***



**DON'T
MISS**

***DAREDEVIL* #9**

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